

OFFICIAL DISPATCH

VIA: Air Pouch
SPECIFY AIR OR SEA POUCH

DISPATCH NO. MSB-W-1068

SECRET CONTROL

U S OFFICIALS ONLY **NOT AVAILABLE FOR MICROFILM**

TO : Chief of Station, ☒ ☐

DATE: 17 March 1949

FROM : Chief, Foreign Branch M

SUBJECT: GENERAL - Operational
SPECIFIC - Valerio BENUZZI

Reference - MSRA-1615, 1677

1. Valerio BENUZZI was born 30 November 1892 at Trento. He is described as 6 ft, 3 in. tall, with black hair, brown eyes, and strongly built. One Maria SOUFF was for years the mistress of BENUZZI and reportedly always travelled with him. It is not known whether this relationship continues. BENUZZI was originally a journalist but became a SIN CS agent in 1934. In 1937 he was sentenced to 5 years open arrest when he was discovered to be submitting reports to the OVRA and the UPI (Fascist Office of Political Investigation connected with the Ministry of Interior) also. During 1938 Subject had allegedly offered his services to the British through the wife of the British Ambassador (sic.), but he received no reply. Again in December 1942 Subject was employed as a SIN CS informant, and we are unable to determine any definite date of termination, though it seems to be reasonably clear that he was terminated. According to our records, Subject worked for both the Abwehr and the SD, though he was apparently of no great use to either. He again contacted the SIS in Switzerland during the war. In short, Subject's history is one of a completely unscrupulous professional informant.

2. WADN definitely recalls the story of BENUZZI's abduction by the British with the connivance of the Swiss MIB, and states it to be, in important details at least, true. There is no definite record of the affair available in our files. However, Walther RAUFF, BENUZZI's SD case officer, is quoted by Theodor SALVECK in the latter's interrogation as stating that BENUZZI had been lured into Switzerland and arrested by the British. RAUFF himself stated under interrogation that he had not decided whether BENUZZI escaped to Switzerland voluntarily, was kidnapped by enemy IS or had been playing a double game from the start. RAUFF said that although he had plans for BENUZZI in Switzerland in case of the fall of Northern Italy, he had forbidden BENUZZI to perform any intelligence mission in Switzerland, though he (RAUFF) did not object to BENUZZI's trips on other business. According to RAUFF, BENUZZI went to Lugano on 25 February 1945 and did not return. BENUZZI's "wife" went to Switzerland to investigate and determined that BENUZZI had been last seen in Bern at Hotel Bellevue on 21st hours on the evening of 22 or 23 February, accompanied

Reg. 68-6-2 OPERA.

FORM NO. 51-29
APR 1947

RECORDED
SECRET CONTROL
CLASSIFICATION
U S OFFICIALS ONLY

17 Mar 49

(789)

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2006

SECRET CONTROL

U S OFFICIALS ONLY

by two persons. His valuables had been left behind in his room. RAUFF considered BENUZZI to be a born information merchant, and regarded his material on Italian political affairs as both voluminous and excellent. BENUZZI always reported verbally to RAUFF.

3. We have at hand XL-8971, apparently not sent Bern, which is a CISEDIC interrogation of BENUZZI. In this document the abduction account understandably does not occur. However, certain points are of interest in connection with MBBA-1616. We will quote for your information the paragraphs of XL-8971 dealing with BENUZZI's activities in Switzerland.

"46. Activities in Switzerland

Subject left for Switzerland for the first time on 11 Dec 44 and went to the Albergo PALAZZO at LUZERN. He states that he was unaware that Captain BIRKBECK was also living at the Hotel. Subject saw Bianco BRICCHETTO and also the Bishop of Lugano to whom he explained that he had come to discuss helping the Jews in N. ITALY by means of the Red Cross. Subject also saw CARACORANDE with whom he discussed the position in MILAN. Subject also saw Capt. BIRKBECK and Major DE GASTON (GASTON?). On 13 Dec., Subject went to GENEVA and put up at the Hotel de BERGUES. Subject made an appointment with SCHWARZENBURG to whom Subject had been recommended by the Swiss Consul in MILAN as being interested in the Jewish question. Subject was introduced by SCHWARZENBURG to Salomon KATZ, Head of the Swiss branch of the American Joint Distribution Committee, and through her he met VALERA, president of the Jewish Italian Committee. The main subject of all these discussions seems to have been the possibilities of the exchange of Jews interned in GERMANY and at BOLZANO and arrangements for sending them comforts as well as to attempt to impede the despatch of Jews to GERMANY.

"47. Subject then went to BRENN with the Italian Vice Consul VERRI and his secretary who had been in COCCO's section of SIM at NAPLES. With VERRI, Subject called on Col. DEMARO, SIM representative in Switzerland, to whom Subject explained that he might be sent by the SD to Switzerland with a mission after the fall of MILAN, and Subject mentioned that he had been in touch with the British in LUZERN.....On 18 Dec., Subject returned to MILAN via LUZERN. From mid Jan., the time of Subject's second visit, until the end of Feb. 45, Subject went to SWITZERLAND about five times during which he discussed with various of the above-mentioned the possible exchange of PATTERSON and PARRI."

4. According to the above information BENUZZI first went to Switzerland on 11 December 1944. He was not "captured" before the end of February 1945. The date of XL-8971 is 21 June 1945. Paragraph 50, XL-8971 states: "Soon after capture, Subject gave a considerable amount of information on the GIB but can now add nothing to our knowledge. It is recommended therefore that his case be passed to the Italian authorities for disposal." The period of 30 months imprisonment by the British which

SECRET CONTROL

U S OFFICIALS ONLY

SECRET

U S OFFICIALS ONLY

you have mentioned probably began with his capture and extended until a disposition could be made of the case by Italian authorities, which may well be represented by the acquittal by an Italian court on war criminal charges which you mention in MEMA-1616, paragraph 16.

5. The interrogator's comment in paragraph 46 above, "He states that he was unaware that Captain BIRKBECK was also living at the Hotel", may be an indication that Subject was being interrogated with all the facts of the reported abduction at hand, and with the intent to discover the content of Subject's activities re BIRKBECK. You will also note that the trials described in paragraph 47 above correspond to those described by [] which you mention in MEMA-1616, paragraph 17. This seems to eliminate the apparent conflict which you had noted. Concerning Subject's general attitude, the interrogator commented it was extremely difficult to get a straight answer out of BENUZZI on any subject.

6. Latest information in our files on BENUZZI is contained in PIN 150, 17 May 1948. This document stated that BENUZZI was called to Rome by General PIERCE, recently appointed head of a new special office (called the "New OIRA" by Leftists) under the Ministry of Interior. BENUZZI claimed he was to be employed as PIERCE's secretary. On the strength of this prospect BENUZZI offered to sell to an Italian source any information that would come into BENUZZI's possession in his new position. Rome commented: "BENUZZI is an old informer of PIERCE from as long ago as 1936. He recently called upon PIERCE at the Ministry of Interior following PIERCE's appointment as special aide to SCALBA and offered his services. PIERCE said he could do nothing, but telephoned [] when he asked to see BENUZZI. [] had a brief chat in which he gave BENUZZI the stall. It is not true that BENUZZI has any position with PIERCE, and judging from PIERCE's opinion expressed at lunch on 26 April, he would not use BENUZZI again without having some contacts in between."

SECRET

U S OFFICIALS ONLY